

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IGA-02 AID-20 IO-14 SR-02 ORM-03 AGR-20 INT-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8482

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4090

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT, THE NEW CABINET AND THE DROUGHT

REFS: (A) ADDIS 3724; (B) ADDIS A-50 OF 3/74

1. PRIME MINISTER ENDALKACHEW WAS SCHEDULED ADDRESS JOINT SESSION PARLIAMENT APRIL 10, BUT WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HISTORIC FIRST DID NOT TAKE PLACE. DEPUTIES HAD PREVIOUSLY CALLED ENDALKACHEW TO EXPLAIN IEG PLANS RE DROUGHT RELIEF, AND WHEN THEY LEARNED YESTERDAY HE PLANNED DISCUSS POLICY DECLARATION INSTEAD, THEY OBJECTED IN TYPICAL CACOPHONOUS MANNER AND PM DID NOT SPEAK. THEREUPON JOINT SESSION FORMED COMMITTEE TO STUDY DROUGHT SITUATION AND PROPOSAL FOR ISSUES PRIMIN TO ADDRESS IN FUTURE APPEARANCE.

2. APRIL 11 ETHIOPIAN HERALD EDITORIAL CHIDED UNORDERLY DEPUTIES FOR PREVENTING PM SPEECH AND FOR WASTING TIME AND ENERGY IN GENERAL. YESTERDAY'S EVENTS IN LINE LAST WEEK'S HARDHITTING ATTACK ON IRRESPONSIBLE AND CORRUPT LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (REF A), AND WITH RECENT EMERGENCE ELECTED REPS AS MORE EFFECTIVE SOUNDINGBOARD COUNTRY'S ILLS AND CRITICS OF EXECUTIVE. IN
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PAST TWO MONTHS LOWER HOUSE, IN CONTRAST SEDATE SENATE, HAS

TAKEN INITIATIVE INFORMING COMMITTEES TO ADVISE IEG ON TEACHER, CELU, CAA AND DROUGHT PROBLEMS. REPORTEDLY, COMMITTEES CONSISTENTLY TAKING SIDE OF WORKERS IN LABOR MATTERS.

3. DROUGHT PROBLEMS IN PARTICULAR HAVE BEEN ON MINDS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS. (LARGE ENCAMPMENT NEAR PARLIAMENT OF HUNGRY, DROUGHT-AFFECTED VICTIMS FROM NORTH HELPING STIMULATE THEIR CONCERN.) DEPUTIES FEEL THEY MUST PUSH NEW CABINET INTO MOVING FASTER TO ALLEVIATE DROUGHT SUFFERING, JUST AS THEY DID YEAR AGO (SEE ADDIS 4732 OF 1973). DEPUTIES REMAIN UNHAPPY OVER SLOW DISTRIBUTION OF GRAIN TO FAMINE SUFFERERS, PARTICULARLY WHILE SOME GRAIN WAREHOUSES BULGING, EVEN NEAR FAMINE AREAS.

4. JUST AS YOUNGER MILITARY AND STUDENTS, DEPUTIES TEND THINK NEW CABINET WILL HAVE TO BE CONSTANTLY PRODDED INTO DELIVERING PROMISED REFORMS. THEY ARE WILLING GIVE ENDALKACHEW GROUP A CHANCE BUT SKEPTICAL IT CAPABLE PERFORMING ADEQUATELY. POLICY DECLARATION RECEIVED WITH NOTABLE LACK ENTHUSIASM AT PARLIAMENT. DEPUTIES, HOWEVER, HAPPY OVER THEIR IMPROVED PUBLIC IMAGE AND OPTIMISTIC THEIR POWER WILL INCREASE AS RESULT BOTH PROMISED CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION AND WEAKENING OF EXECUTIVE.

5. THERE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION AMONG OBSERVERS WHETHER UPSURGE PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITY PAST TEN WEEKS SPONTANEOUS REACTION TO UNSETTLED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OR WHETHER IT BEING ORCHESTRATED WITH MILITARY, LABOR AND STUDENTS TO MAINTAIN PRESSURE ON ENDALKACHEW. OBSERVERS NOTE THAT PARLIAMENT'S TOUGH STAND ON GASOLINE AND OTHER PRICE CONTROLS IN JANUARY WAS LED BY MAJ. ADMASE ZELLEKE, ONE OF WHOSE MANY BROTHERS IN THE MILITARY REPORTEDLY LED TAKEOVER AT DEBRE ZEIT IN FEBRUARY.

6. WHILE DESIROUS OF MORE POPULAR FORM OF GOVERNMENT, SOME MODERATES AS WELL AS RADICALS SKEPTICAL THAT CURRENT MEMBERS PARLIAMENT ADEQUATELY REPRESENT PEOPLE OR CAPABLE ASSUMING MORE RESPONSIBILITY, SUCH AS DRAFTING LEGISLATION. (SEE MEMCON WITH SPEAKER OF LOWER HOUSE DATED 3/12/74). FOUR-PAGE LEAFLET RECENTLY DISTRIBUTED IN PARLIAMENT STRONGLY ATTACKS PAST AND CURRENT LEADERSHIP PARLIAMENT AND CIVIL SERVANTS ASSIGNED IT FOR WORKING WITH REGIME TO KEEP PARLIAMENT IMPOTENT. LEAFLET ACCUSES MAJORITY PARLIAMENTARIANS OF ROUTINELY "SELLING OUT" CONFIDENTIAL

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TO THOSE IN POWER AND QUESTIONS WHETHER EXECUTIVE MANIPULATION WILL CEASE.

7. PARLIAMENTARY CRITICS THINK NEW ELECTIONS SHOULD BE CALLED PRIOR PARLIAMENT'S VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON ENDALKACHEW. EVEN THEN, THEY EXPRESS DOUBT THAT POLITICALLY UNEDUCATED ETHIOPIANS WILL VOTE ACCORDING THEIR ULTIMATE BEST INTERESTS. THESE CRITICS ALSO SKEPTICAL CURRENT PARLIAMENTARIANS WOULD

APPROVE LEGISLATION AFFECTING THEIR VESTED INTERESTS, SUCH
AS MEANINGFUL LAND REFORM.

8. COMMENT: AS MEMBERS PROVINCIAL ELITE AND URBAN MIDDLE CLASS,
DEPUTIES DESIRE MORE EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT AND MORE ECONOMIC
BENEFITS FOR THEIR AREAS. IT UNLIKELY AT THIS STAGE PARLIAMENT,
AS NOW CONSTITUTED, WOULD BE ABLE FILL LARGE POLITICAL VACUUM
OR OTHERWISE PROVIDE IN NEAR TERM SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO
DIRECTION NATIONAL POLICY.

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